

Melancon to Meet White House Chief of Staff Next Week
June 4, 2010

WASHINGTON D.C. – Today in a meeting with President Barack Obama, U.S. Congressman Charlie Melancon (LA-03) called for the Administration to take several necessary steps to expedite federal inspections of offshore drilling rigs, lessening the economic impact on south Louisiana. During their meeting, Congressman Melancon said he agreed with the President's goal of improving safety standards to protect workers and the environment. However, Melancon emphasized the importance of offshore drilling to Louisiana's economy and urged the President to shorten the moratorium on deepwater drilling.

"First our fishermen were put out of business by the BP oil disaster. Now our oil industry workers could be shut down. We have to find some middle ground. Every day drilling is on hold, our workers are paying the price.

"To save jobs and protect Louisiana's economy, I asked the President to consider ways to speed up the federal review of rigs so these inspections can be completed as quickly and as efficiently as possible. From our discussions, I believe the President understands how important offshore drilling is to our economy.

"Next week I will be meeting with White House Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel to further discuss how we can protect Louisiana jobs and businesses, while at the same time improving safety standards so we never again experience a disaster like the BP oil leak.

"We will also discuss ways to keep big oil companies from abandoning Louisiana-based oil service companies and their workers – as well as the fishermen and small businesses – who have been adversely affected by this disaster.

"We need to continue offshore drilling, but safety must be our number one priority."

Congressman Melancon has been leading efforts in Louisiana to coordinate the private, federal, state, and local response to the oil leak caused by the explosion on the Deepwater Horizon oil platform over a month ago. He represents in Congress the areas of coastal Louisiana most directly affected by the oil leak, including Plaquemines, St. Bernard, Terrebonne, Lafourche and southern Jefferson Parishes. The Deepwater Horizon platform was located 50 miles off the coast of Louisiana's Third Congressional District.

###